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LITERATURE AND ART

(Continued from Page 2)

and ambling gait had become as fam-
iliar to them as one of their kind.
"Fishers by the sea, with spear
poised, stopped their spear in midair
to sing out 'alohas' to his call from
a neighboring cove; oftentimes in the
same spirit was he welcomed by the
waders on the beach at night, who
flashed a torch to attract the finny
tribe. Like them, too, he wore san-
dals with wooden heels and toe
pieces to spare the bare feet from
the coral pebbles in the shallow wa-
ters. From the native, too, he had
learned to manage a surfboat as skill-
fully as any Kanaka, a thing possible
to only a strangely privileged few
who have not grown up in the
"strange south seas."

"It was difficult to tell just when
Mr. London did the quantity of writ-
ing that came from his pen. He was
so much in evidence in Honolulu and
elsewhere in the islands that it
seemed hardly possible to associate
him with the prolific writer he was
known to be. A novel of his 'Jerry,'
a dog story, announced to begin as a
serial in one of the magazines next
month, was finished in Honolulu ear-
ly in 1905, while another dog novel to
be called 'Michael' (each of about 80-
000 words) was about completed
when he and Mrs. London sailed for
San Francisco in July of last year."

The George H. Doran Co. fur-
nishes information concerning the
whereabouts of some English writers.
Arnold Bennett, author of "The
Lion's Share," is now a press agent
and secret service man for the Brit-
ish cause. E. V. Lucas, author of
"More Wanderings in London" and
three other new volumes, is director
of Sir J. M. Barrie's base hospital in
France. Norman Angell, author of
"The World's Highway," is taking a
compulsory vacation at a German con-
centration camp near Berlin. Hugh
Walpole is serving as an hospital
aide with the Russians on the Rou-
manian border.

"The Harbor" is Ernest Poole's
first novel, but "Take Your Medi-
cine," which he wrote in collabora-
tion with Harriet Ford, is by no
means his first play. He conferred
his experience to a recent interview-
er: "Some time ago I became so in-
terested in this way that I wrote nine
or ten plays, which kept me away
from writing books for years. Seven
of the plays were so badly done that
I tore them up before showing them
to anybody. One was produced in
New York without success, the ninth
was called 'None so Blind.' John
Mason took the leading man's part
and it had a fairly good run here in
New York." It seems likely that
when Mr. Poole has "Taken His
Medicine" he will go back to novel
writing. It is not a glittering suc-
cess.

The War Too Big for Literature
Rudyard Kipling has turned his
hand to a description in prose and
verse of the Jutland sea fight, based
on admiralty reports of the action. No
doubt his is as competent and prac-
ticed a hand as there is to essay the
task, and what a poet can do to vivify
a routine official report and make
it glow we know from Tennyson's
"Charge of the Light Brigade." Cow-
per's "Toll for the Brave" and a hun-
dred other stirring poems. Surely
England's greatest sea battle since
Trafalgar was something to inspire
even a dull muse!

Yet Kipling's account of it, as re-
spects at least the first installment is
disappointing. The verses which in-
troduce it lack distinction and the
prose narrative is commonplace. It is
conceivable that the war should be
too much for the poets. It is on too
vast a scale for them to visualize,
and their imagination is numbed by
events so graphic in themselves that
the deed itself shames the fancy.
What can a poet say to lighten the
effect in the human mind of a death
struggle of aeroplanes aloft or of a
death-blow to a great passenger ship
under water?

The prose writers have had the bet-
ter of the poets in this matter, but
they in turn have had to yield the
plan to the reporters, who have mere-
ly described what they saw without
rhetorical embellishment. The facts
have spoken for themselves, and the
highest interest has lain in the plain,
unvarnished tale of the taking of a
trench or of a charge against a forti-
fied hill identified only by a number.
The war has produced whole libraries
of official documents, white, blue and
yellow books, quantities of fiction and
masses of printed matter of all de-
scriptions bearing on it. But of lit-
erature in the accepted sense relat-
ing to it and of a quality to outlast
it, there has been none at all. It has
been too big for the human intellect
to comprehend while it has been in
progress, and it will long tax the ca-
pacity of the historians after it is
over.

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